AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of establishing a path for data transmissions in a ~~system~~ network device having a plurality of possible paths comprising:

defining a configuration policy designating internal connection paths within the device, and

establishing one or more internal connection paths through the ~~system~~ device based upon ~~a~~ the configuration policy.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration policy comprises a configuration policy file stored within the ~~system~~ network device.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the configuration policy file is stored within a configuration database within the ~~system~~ network device.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration policy may be dynamically changed within the system while the ~~system~~ network device continues to operate.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

changing established internal connection paths through the ~~system~~ network device based upon a configuration policy and changing resource needs.

6. (Currently Amended) A method of establishing a path for data transmissions in a ~~system~~ network device having a plurality of possible paths through a cross-connection card comprising

establishing internal connection paths through the cross-connection card based upon a configuration policy.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises applying the configuration policy based on available ~~system~~ device resources and needs at a given time.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises creating a table in a configuration database to provide connection information to the device ~~system~~.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the step of creating a table further comprises creating a path table.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the step of creating a table further comprises creating a service endpoint table.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises establishing a partial record in a service end point table when a user connects to a particular port on a universal port card in the system.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the method further comprises: sending a notification based on the partial record to a policy provisioning manager.

13. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises implementing a connection policy based on a comparison of at least one new path characteristic with available resources on a forwarding card.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the comparison step further comprises comparing a desired number of time slots with available forwarding card resources.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the comparison step further comprises comparing a desired number of virtual circuits with available forwarding card resources.

16. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises storing configuration table settings in persistent storage to ensure that the configuration settings are maintained in the event of a system shut down.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the device comprises ~~a network device~~ router.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the configuration policy comprises a configuration policy file stored within the ~~system~~ device.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18, wherein the configuration policy file is stored within a configuration database within the ~~system~~ device.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the configuration policy may be dynamically changed within the ~~system~~ device while the ~~system~~ device continues to operate.

21. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

changing established internal connection paths based upon a configuration policy and changing resource needs.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the ~~system comprises a~~ network device comprises a router.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer network device ~~system~~, comprising:

a cross-connection card comprising a plurality of programmable paths internal to said device;

a configuration policy file stored within the computer device ~~system~~; and

a policy provisioning manager for programming the plurality of programmable paths using the configuration policy file.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer device ~~system~~ of claims 23, wherein the computer ~~system is a~~ network device comprises a router.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer device ~~system~~ of claims 23, further comprising:

a plurality of forwarding cards including a plurality of ports coupled to the cross-connection card; and

a plurality of physical cards including a plurality of ports coupled to the cross-connection card, wherein the plurality of programmable paths connect ports of forwarding cards with particular ports of physical cards.

26. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

filling in the partial record with data from the policy provisioning manager.

27. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

implementing a connection policy to establish the path for data transmissions;

modifying the connection policy; and

using the modified connection policy to establish the path for data transmission.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the connection policy is stored in a configuration database.

29. (New) In a network device comprising at least one port for receiving data from an external device and a plurality of forwarding systems for processing the received data, a method of establishing a path between said port and at least one of said forwarding systems, comprising:

defining a configuration policy for designating at least one port to at least one of said forwarding systems, and

utilizing said configuration policy to establish an internal connection path between said port and at least one of said forwarding systems.